Proposed pool emptying guidelines for Wellesley

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Swimming Pool, Hot Tub and Ice Rink emptying guidelines

Current MA Gov water disposal regulations 105 435 CMR

435.26:   Waste Water and Backwash Water Disposal

(1)   No waste water resulting from draining of a swimming, wading or special purpose pool or backwash water may be discharged on the watershed of a public surface water supply without prior approval of the Department of Environmental Protection. Any waste water resulting from draining a swimming, wading or special purpose pool shall be dechlorinated prior to its discharging.

(2)   No waste water resulting from draining a swimming, wading or special purpose pool or backwash water may be discharged into a storm drain without approval of the agency having control over such facilities.

(3)   Waste water resulting from draining a swimming, wading or special purpose pool or backwash water may be discharged to a subsurface disposal system if it is specifically designed for that purpose and approved by the appropriate agency.

105 435 CMR link : http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/regs/105cmr435.rtf

Why is the town of Wellesley creating additional guidelines?

There have been several incidents in the past where residents believed that they were in compliance with the state regulations when emptying their pools; but their actions resulted in damage to wetlands. Several towns now issue guidelines on the emptying of pools in order to prevent damage to natural resources and to encourage home owners to consider better management of waste water.

The Wetlands Protection Committee has reviewed best practice in other towns with the following objectives:
   A.   Avoid the use of storm drains to handle waste water. Storm drains almost invariably lead into a wetland resource area; the outlets of some of the storm drains in the town are unknown. Sudden large flows through the drains result in erosion damage, localised flooding, increased suspended solids and silt deposition, transport of oil and other road contaminants in addition to any chemical contaminants present in the waste water (chlorine and alternative biocides, salt).

B. Obviate the need for residents to contact either the Wetlands Protection Committee or the Town for permission to manage their pools providing they follow the guidelines.

Proposed guidelines

1. No owner of a private pool shall drain or allow water to drain from the pool directly or indirectly onto public property or onto property other than that of the pool owner.
2. No owner of a private pool shall drain or allow water to drain from the pool into a known wetland resource area either directly or indirectly; this includes ponds, streams, rivers, wetlands, buffer zones around wetlands and ditches. Owners should take note of landscaping and contours that could deflect wastewater into sensitive areas.
3. The guidelines recommend the discharge of private pool waste water over landscaping when the following provisions are met:
    1. Shut off the chlorination system or stop adding chlorine a week or more before draining the pool water. Chlorine levels in discharge and filter backwash should be lowered.
    2. Make sure the pH level is between 6.5 and 8.5, the normal pH range of surface and ground waters.
    3. Ensure the discharged water is released at a rate where it can infiltrate without leaving the owner's property. Your lawn and trees can benefit from deep fall watering; it will also be filtered naturally and recharge deep into the ground.
    4. Wastewater may be discharged into a subsurface disposal system if it is specifically designed for the purpose of infiltration and the water quality meets the above recommendations.
4. If you cannot ensure that the water quality of the wastewater meets the above recommendations, is in excess of the volume that can be infiltrated on the owner's property, or is contaminated with chemicals that cannot be removed / allowed to degrade; then the wastewater must be removed by a specialist waste management company (a tanker truck or such like).